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PHIL 200E.02: Ethics - The Great Traditions

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Chapter 1

Syllabus

1.1 General Information

- Course Information:

- Course Number: PHIL 200E-02
- Credits: 3
- Class meets: MWF 12:10 pm - 1:00 pm, LA 11
- Prerequisites: None

check # of registered students

- Instructor Information

- Office: LA 153
- Office Hours: Fridays 8:00 - 11:00 am and by appointment
- Mailbox: LA 101
- Email: soazig.lebihan@msu.umt.edu
- TA: Max Clark mc117342@grizmail.umt.edu

check email

- Course Websites

- Blackboard: <http://courseware.umt.edu/>
- The most up-to-date course information (including class notes, homework assignments, announcements, any revision of the schedule, exam questions, links etc.) can be found on the course web site: <http://www.soaziglebihan.org/PHIL200.php>

1.2 Course Description

- Course Description:

We all have ethical convictions, that is, we all have beliefs about what is right or wrong to do. We also know that ethical issues are not easy to solve. Various people have conflicting convictions, and we sometimes find ourselves facing ethical dilemmas. A course in Ethics should give the means to critically evaluate ethical beliefs, your own and others'. The questions to start with are 1. whether or no our beliefs are consistent with one another, and 2. whether or not we have good reasons to believe what we believe.

To this aim, we will examine the major approaches in ethical theory. We will carefully read the works of great philosophers, including Aristotle, Kant and Mill. We will also look at the works of some important contemporary philosophers in the field. On the basis of these readings, we will be able to construct a tool box for the evaluation of ethical arguments. With this tool box in hand, we will work our way through topics in applied ethics, including cloning, abortion, animal rights, euthanasia, death penalty and race/gender issues. Note that the focus of the course will be on the Western vision of morality.

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

- show critical knowledge of the major approaches in ethics;
- recognize the origin and context of ethical arguments;
- evaluate the validity and soundness of ethical arguments;
- convey your own ethical convictions with clarity and circumspection.

- Required Texts:

- (EMP) Rachels and Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 5th Edition, MacGraw-Hill
- (RTD) Rachels and Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do*, 4th Edition, MacGraw-Hill

1.3 Course Requirements

The first requirement for the course is that students carefully read all assignments, and come to class fully prepared.

- Attendance and Etiquette

Attendance is crucial for your success, especially in a philosophy class. You are expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. If you have to leave early, please tell me at the beginning of class and sit close to the exit to minimize the disturbance to the class.

To attend a class does not mean merely sitting in class. You are expected to give your full attention to the class. Cell phones or other modes of communications should be turned off for the duration of class. You will be asked to leave if you are doing anything not relevant for class, e.g. reading the newspaper, sleeping, doing work for other classes, etc. Three offenses of this type will count as one absence.

- Exams

There will be 8 exams, roughly every week and a half.

The *first seven exams* are non-cumulative. They will each be worth 10 per cent of your grade. They cover the material since the last exam, or the beginning of the class for the first exam. The first exam takes place on Friday, September 9. The exams will consist in 3 parts:

1. Part 1 : You will be asked to answer 3 questions that test your command of the course content. Your answer should not be more than 30 words long for each question.
2. Part 2: You will be asked to identify the philosophical point in a passage taken from the readings. Your answer should not be more than 30 words long for each question.
3. Part 3: You will be asked to write a mini-essay (no more than 200 words) on a topic related to the material covered in class.

The answers in Part 1 will receive a letter grade. Your answer in Part 2 and 3 will be graded P (passing), U (unsatisfactory), or E (excellent). A P will raise the grade for part 1 by one step (B to B+ for example), a U will lower it by one step, and a E will raise it by two steps (D to A- for example).

The *final exam* is cumulative. It will consist in 12 questions, 9 out of the preceding exams, three on the material covered since the last exam. It will have the weight of three ordinary exams. *To pass the course, you have to pass the final exam.*

Make up exams will be given only in extreme circumstances, family death, severe illness, severe car accident, etc. *Proof of extreme circumstances is required in order to make up an exam.* Oversleeping is not an acceptable excuse, nor busses running late, stuck in detox, etc. Take extra precautions on exam days to avoid these problems. Exams not taken, for any reason, will receive a zero.

- Academic misconduct

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu/SA>). The exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

- Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and wish to discuss reasonable accommodations for this course, contact me privately to discuss the specific modifications you wish to request. Please be advised I may request that you provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services, located in Lommason Center 154, please do so in order to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at www.umt.edu/dss/.

1.4 Course Schedule

Note that the course schedule is subject to change. Consult the course website for the most up to date class information, especially if you miss a class. You are held responsible for staying up to date in class even if you were absent. No class day is fixed. I may also add some readings along the way.

Date	Topics and Readings
8/25	Syllabus and Introduction: What is Morality? EMP 1, RTD 1
8/27	Philosophy and Arguments RTD 2, 12 (Pence)
8/29	Cultural Relativism EMP 2
9/1	Labor Day - No class
9/3	EXAM I - Moral Subjectivism EMP 3, RTD 7 (Hume)
9/5	Subjectivism cont'd
9/8	Subjectivism cont'd RTD 3 (Mackie)
9/10	Subjectivism applied: Homosexuality RTD 13 (Leiser)
9/12	EXAM II - Movie: The Courage to Care
9/15	Morality and Religion EMP 4, RTD 5 (Aquinas)
9/17	Morality of Abortion RTD 11 (Thomson)
9/19	Morality of Abortion RTD 10 (Marquis)
9/22	EXAM III - Psychological Egoism EMP 5
9/24	Psychological Egoism, cont'd
9/26	Ethical Egoism EMP 6
9/29	Egoism applied RTD 14 (Engel), 15 (Singer)
10/1	EXAM IV - Utilitarianism EMP 7, RTD 8
10/3	Utilitarianism, cont'd
10/6	Utilitarianism EMP 8
10/8	Animal rights RTD 19 (Singer), 20 (Machan)
10/10	Integrity and Experience RTD 16 (Williams), 27 (Nozick)
10/13	EXAM V - Movie: A death of one's own
10/15	Movie cont'd
10/17	Movie cont'd